WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image synthesis method comprising:

a placement information obtaining step of obtaining placement information about a plurality of images in which adjacent images have a common subject region; and

a synthesis step of combining the images using a mapping mode in accordance with the placement information.

2. An image synthesis method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

a focal length obtaining step of obtaining focal length information of each of the images;

wherein the mapping mode in accordance with the focal length information and the placement information is used in said synthesis step.

3. An image synthesis method according to Claim 1, further comprising a changing step of changing the mapping mode.

4. An image synthesis method according to Claim 3, further comprising a generating step of issuing, when an image formed by changing the mapping mode in said changing step does not comply with a predetermined condition set in

accordance with the mapping mode, a warning and generating a synthesized image in accordance with the predetermined condition.

5. An image synthesis method according to Claim 1, further comprising a displaying step of displaying a cuttable rectangular region without a margin in the synthesized image.

6. ~~An image synthesis apparatus~~ comprising: placement information obtaining ~~means~~ for obtaining placement information ~~about a~~ plurality of images in which adjacent images ~~have~~ a common subject region; and synthesis means for combining the images using a ~~mapping~~ mode in accordance with the placement ~~information~~

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7. An image synthesis apparatus according to Claim 6, further comprising:

focal length obtaining means for obtaining focal length information of each of the images;

wherein said synthesis means uses the mapping mode in accordance with the focal length information and the placement information.

8. An image synthesis apparatus according to Claim 6,

further comprising changing means for changing the mapping mode.

9.   An image synthesis apparatus according to Claim 8, further comprising generating means for issuing, when an image formed by changing the mapping mode by said changing means does not comply with a predetermined condition set in accordance with the mapping mode, a warning and generating a synthesized image in accordance with the predetermined condition.

10.   An image synthesis apparatus according to Claim 6, further comprising display means for displaying a cuttable rectangular region without a margin in the synthesized image.

11.   A computer readable storage medium having recorded thereon a program for implementing a computer-implementable image synthesis method for combining a plurality of images, said program comprising:

a placement information obtaining step of obtaining placement information about a plurality of images in which adjacent images have a common subject region; and

a synthesis step of combining the images using a mapping mode in accordance with the placement information.

12. A computer-readable storage medium according to Claim 11, said program further comprising:

a focal length obtaining step of obtaining focal length information of each of the images;

wherein the mapping mode in accordance with the focal length information and the placement information is used in said synthesis step.

13. A computer-readable storage medium according to Claim 11, said program further comprising a changing step of changing the mapping mode.

14. An image synthesis method conforming to a plurality of mapping transformation modes, comprising:

a generating step of generating, prior to performing mapping transformation of input images, coordinate-space transformation parameters for transforming a coordinate space of one image among the images into a coordinate space of another image; and

an image synthesis step of combining the images based on a given mapping mode and the coordinate-space transformation parameters.

15. An image synthesis method according to Claim 14, further comprising:

a changing instruction step of issuing a mapping mode changing instruction;

wherein, in said image synthesis step, coordinate transformation parameters set for each of the mapping modes are changed and the input images are again combined in accordance with the changing instruction issued in said changing instruction step.

16. An image synthesis method according to Claim 14, further comprising:

a reference position setting step of arbitrarily setting a reference position of a synthesized image;

wherein, in said image synthesis step, the images are combined in accordance with the reference position set in said reference position setting step.

17. An image synthesis method according to Claim 14, further comprising a storage step of storing a generated panoramic synthesized image, and coordinate transformation parameters and the coordinate-space transformation parameters, which are used for generating the panoramic synthesized image, every time the synthesized image is generated in said image synthesis step.

18. An image synthesis apparatus conforming to a

plurality of mapping transformation modes, comprising:

generating means for generating, prior to performing mapping transformation of input images, coordinate-space transformation parameters for transforming a coordinate space of one image among the images into a coordinate space of another image; and

image synthesis means for combining the images based on a given mapping mode and the coordinate-space transformation parameters.

19. An image synthesis apparatus according to Claim 18, further comprising:

changing means for changing the mapping mode;

wherein said image synthesis means changes coordinate transformation parameters set for each of the mapping modes and again combines the input images in accordance with a mapping mode changing instruction.

20. An image synthesis apparatus according to Claim 18, further comprising:

reference position setting means for arbitrarily setting a reference position of a synthesized image;

wherein said image synthesis means combines the images in accordance with the reference position set by said reference position setting means.

21. An image synthesis apparatus according to Claim 18, further comprising storage means for storing a generated panoramic synthesized image, and coordinate transformation parameters and the coordinate-space transformation parameters, which are used for generating the panoramic synthesized image, every time the synthesized image is generated by said image synthesis means.

22. A computer-readable storage medium having recorded thereon a program for implementing a computer-implementable panoramic image synthesis method conforming to a plurality of mapping transformation modes, said program comprising:

a generating step of generating, prior to performing mapping transformation of input images, coordinate-space transformation parameters for transforming a coordinate space of one image among the images into a coordinate space of another image; and

an image synthesis step of combining the images based on a given mapping mode and the coordinate-space transformation parameters.

23. An image synthesis method for combining input images into a synthesized image, comprising:

an editing step of editing the synthesized image; and

a storage step of storing the synthesized image obtained every time the synthesized image is edited.

24.   An image synthesis method according to Claim 23, wherein a mapping mode is changed and the images are combined in said editing step.

25.   An image synthesis method according to Claim 23, wherein an adjoining part of the images is corrected in said editing step.

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